GSA

USACCESS Program

Blue Top Newsletter

Upcoming Meetings and Training

Meeting/Training	Date & Time (EST)	Location	Dial-In Info
Registrar Classroom Training	Wed and Thu Apr 8-9 May 6-7	HP Chantilly, VA	Contact Jim Schoening for information or to Register
CAB	Thu, Apr 16 9:30 to 12:00	Grant Thornton 333 John Carlyle Dr., Alexandria, VA 4th Fl. Conf. Rm	No Telecon Provided
User Group	Tue, Apr 21 9:00-12:00	GSA Central Office 1800F St. NW Conference Rm. 3046	888-455-1864 Passcode: USER GROUP

Recent Activation Issues

As many of you are aware, we have experienced issues over the past week with the Activation service. In some cases, the service interruptions were intermittent (as was the case March 17-19) and some activations and card updates completed successfully, while others had to be retried. Advisories were posted on TRACKS and up-dated once the issue was resolved. The intermittent issues were due to a problem with our vendor CA, which was fully fixed on March 19.

The outage that occurred this week on Monday, March 23 and pre-vented any activations and updates from completing was due to an expired RA encryption certificate. Again, an advisory was posted on TRACKS and emailed to Agency Leads, and updated once the issue was resolved. Given the nature of the certificate (encrypted) and how it does not track and present itself in system logs (which are used to track all other system certificates), it took an all-day trou-bleshooting effort with several of our system vendors to identify the issue and fix the certificate. We are in process of incorporating a new tool that will track this certificate (and any other encrypted information) to make sure this does not happen again.

Special Points of Note:

Now found on **www.fedidcard.gov**:

> **Service Order Requests and Test Card Orders**

> **Role Holder Web Based Training Registration**

> **Deployment Activities and USAccess Center Status Alert**

> **Contact Steve Sill (Stephen.sill@gsa.gov) to be added to User Group (UG) distribution list.**

> **Contact Jim Schoening (jim.schoening@gsa.gov) for Registrar Classroom Training sign up**

Activation Issues Continued

We understand the frustrations these recent issues have caused you and your users and the likely repeat visits to activation workstations. We apologize for the inconvenience and want to stress that we are committed to providing solid service to our USAccess customers. We are also committed to providing communication to you during service interruptions and will provide more regular updates should we experience issues again.

Fixed Infrastructure Windows 7 Workstation Replacement Update

The schedule for fixed workstation replacement is now posted on the Agency Lead Portal (ALP). This schedule includes the planned timeframes for fixed site Prep Calls, Windows 7 equipment shipments, and Install Calls.

Prep Calls
Emails went out last week to the Wave 1 & 2 site POCS inviting them to attend a Prep Call, and the first two calls were held for these groups on March 19 and March 20. Emails for other waves (3 & 4) have also gone out, and Prep Calls are scheduled for every week from now until June when the Win 7 replacements are complete.

Please make sure your sites attend their Prep Calls, as this meeting reviews the process for replacing their existing XP workstations and triggers shipping of their Windows 7 equipment. If a site does not attend a Prep Call, equipment will not ship to the site.

First Windows 7 Equipment Shipping
For those who attended the Prep Calls last week, equipment will begin shipping next week and an email with shipment tracking information will be sent to the Site POC listed in the master schedule posted on the ALP. The email also includes instructions for scheduling an install call and outlines the steps sites should take prior to the install call. Please review these steps and make sure your sites are prepared when the HP Install technician contacts the site.

PIV Card Log On for Registrars/Activators—Know your UPN and Password
One important step that should be completed prior to the Install Call is to make sure your Registrars and Activators know their password and UserPrincipalName (UPN). The UPN serves as the user name and can be located following the instructions provided in the USAccess Fixed Workstation Replacement Process document that was attached to Prep Call invites.

Windows 7 Update Continued

With the new Windows 7 fixed workstations, Registrars and Activators will use their USAccess PIV card to log on. This is a new requirement, as these Registrars and Activators now use a program-provided user name and password to log on to the machine. Since part of the Windows 7 machine log on workflow authenticates the PIV card by verifying the password associated with the UPN is valid, Registrars and Activators must have an active password. If the fixed workstation log on workflow detects the password associated with the UPN and PIV card being used has expired, the Registrar and Activator will get an error message and be prompted to change their password before logging on to the system.

We believe most Registrars and Activators working on fixed workstations have never used their UPN and passwords to log on to a machine or portal (not current process). Since passwords expire every 90 days per MSO security policy, it's reasonable to assume these passwords need to be reset.

To ease the install of the Windows 7 machines, we ask Agency Leads and fixed Site POCs to work with their Registrars and Activators to know their UPN and reset their password prior to their Windows 7 fixed workstation Install Call. Instructions for finding a UPN and resetting a password are included in the USAccess Fixed Workstation Replacement Process document that was sent with Prep Call invites.

Weekly Reporting
A weekly report will be sent to Agency Leads shortly by the MSO (and posted on the ALP) now that Prep Calls have begun and equipment will start shipping next week. This report will show Agency Leads the schedule for their fixed sites, as well as their progress in meeting all of their milestones.

Service Enhancements

System Changes Since Last Blue Top

- **Maintenance was completed as scheduled on Saturday, March 21, 2015**

  This release updated the fixed enrollment workstations with the new certificate that is required by March 12 as the current certificate is set to expire on March 13. All but a handful of fixed workstations received this updated certificate and the help desk is following up with the site directly. Please ask your offices to respond to the help desk immediately if they receive a phone call. Any fixed or enrollment or LCS machine that does not get the updated certificate by March 12 will experience issues completing enrollments when it expires on March 13.

Planned Changes

- **USAccess Software Release 9.6.3 is scheduled for Saturday, March 28**

  This release includes monthly maintenance as well as support for Internet Explorer 11. Following this release, USAccess customers can access USAccess portals using this version of Internet Explorer. A release notice is posted on the Agency Lead portal.

  Please plan for the USAccess Service and role holder portals to be unavailable for most of the day.

Security Tip

Always Check for Card Updates

Please make sure that you check for card updates during every appointment, before allowing a card holder to leave your station. We are having too many cases where card holders have to schedule multiple appointments because a pending update or rekey was not completed.

Over the years, one of the most common problems we have seen is with cardholders who arrive at an appointment requiring both a PIN reset and a card update, but leave after receiving the PIN reset, not knowing that they did not have their card properly updated as well.

Please remember that some of your customers drive long distances to get to your credentialing station, so it's even more important for you to confirm they have completed all necessary actions before leaving.